

### Take the Survey

If you did not get the opportunity to respond to my economic survey via email, I welcome you to fill out the survey below and mail it to my office. I look forward to hearing your opinion on how to better improve our quality of life.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email [Optional] \_\_\_\_\_

Home Number [Optional] \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Given the current economic situation, which three of the following impact your financial situation most?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food prices     | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit card debt  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utility costs   | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing costs     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gasoline prices | <input type="checkbox"/> Health care costs |

#### 2. Based on your concerns, what would you like to see Congress do to help you with your cost of living?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lower interest rates  | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide more heating assistance                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public transportation subsidies to reduce the cost of public transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Extend unemployment benefits                                |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce health insurance and prescription drug contributions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tax credits for energy-conserving home and business improvements            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other [Please explain] _____                                |
|  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide temporary aid to state and local governments                        | _____  |
| Stabilize mortgage rates   | _____  |

## We're Here To Help!

If you encounter a problem with a federal agency and need assistance, please contact any of my offices. My staff may be able to intervene on your behalf and help to ensure you receive a prompt response. Here are some of the areas in which we may help:

- Federal Student Loans
- Veteran's Benefits & Military Service Problems
- Social Security & Medicare Benefits
- IRS Problems
- Small Business Loan Information
- Immigration, Naturalization, and Citizenship
- Mail Delivery & Service
- FHA & VA Home Loan Applications
- Consumer Protection Referrals
- Disaster Assistance
- Regulatory Compliance

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business

This mailing was prepared, published  
and mailed at taxpayer expense.



*Albio Sires*  
M.C.  
PRESORT STD



REPRESENTATIVE Albio Sires



### Dear Neighbor,

Many seniors across Northern New Jersey are living on a fixed income, while continuing to balance rising health care and energy costs. I am committed to addressing these issues so that those who have worked hard all their lives are able to remain in their homes without having to struggle to pay for basic necessities.

Thank you for taking the time to read about the work Congress is pursuing to provide a better quality of life for our residents. Please know that your input is very important to me, and I urge you to take a few minutes to answer the survey questions on the attached postcard and mail it to my office. This allows me to have a better understanding of your needs and concerns, so that I can work to address them in the upcoming year. Thank you again for sharing your views, and it is an honor serving you in Congress.

Sincerely,

*Albio Sires*  
Albio Sires

## Medicare

Most seniors count on Medicare as their only form of health insurance. Congress is working to ensure Medicare's commitment to our seniors by reversing harmful cuts proposed in President Bush's budget. For example, doctors who treat Medicare beneficiaries were scheduled to receive a 10% cut in the services they provide to Medicare beneficiaries. With this looming cut, many doctors could no longer afford to treat Medicare beneficiaries. Most recently, the House voted to prevent payment cuts for physicians serving Medicare patients in 2008. The President has signed this important legislation, making health care more accessible and more affordable for the elderly.

Congress is also trying to help low-income Medicare beneficiaries by enhancing Medicare benefits for vulnerable populations and strengthening programs that provide financial assistance to cover premiums, cost-sharing, and prescription drug costs. Enhancing and simplifying eligibility and enrollment in these programs will help more beneficiaries afford health care services without being forced to choose between housing, food and medical care.

In addition, Congress made it a priority to lower prescription drug costs for all Medicare beneficiaries. The House passed the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act, which would allow Medicare to negotiate directly with pharmaceutical companies. By using the bargaining power of the millions of Americans enrolled in a Medicare prescription drug plan, Medicare beneficiaries would receive significant savings for their prescription drug costs.

## Energy Assistance

With so many Americans on fixed incomes struggling with the rising cost of home heating, Congress included \$2.6 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in the federal spending bill for this year - a \$400 million increase over last year. This bill was enacted in December, and in January the White House released \$450 million more from the LIHEAP contingency fund for low-income families and seniors. As Congress continues to provide adequate funding for this program, eligible New Jersey residents will continue to receive the help they need as long as they apply for assistance. To determine your eligibility or to reapply for this year, please call 1-800-510-3102.

## Social Security

Families today face real challenges when saving for retirement. Increasing health care costs, rising college tuition, and higher gas and home heating prices make focusing on retirement a difficult task. This means that the Social Security Program will be even more important to future retirees than to previous generations. President Bush has proposed privatizing Social Security as a means of reforming the program. Privatization will only serve to weaken this vital program both for today's recipients and for future retirees. Instead, the program's financial basis needs to be strengthened through reforms to ensure that this widely successful and popular program remains viable for our current retirees and generations to come.

## Consumer Protection

Keeping our families and children safe is also a top priority for this Congress, especially given recent concerns regarding imported products ranging from children's toys to prescription drugs. Millions of products are imported from around the world, including China, every year and Congress is working to ensure that products entering the United States do not contain harmful chemicals. Last year the House passed H.R. 4040, the Consumer Product Safety Modernization Act. This bill adds significant resources and authority for the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). In addition, the bill would enhance recalls and prohibit the sale of recalled products and would speed up public warnings for dangerous products. Lead would also be banned in products for children under the age of 12, and the bill would enhance toy safety requirements. For information regarding product safety, recalls, or to report an unsafe product, please contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission at: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov), and for information related to imported prescriptions drugs, please contact the Food and Drug Administration at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).

Place  
Stamp  
Here

Detach along dotted line

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